

My name is Brendan Jelley, I am a Melbourne based Musical Theatre performer and the Treasurer of Be You Incorporated.

It is quite apparent that our industry is decades behind most in regard to the integration of HR into business plans and company structures. I believe people settle for this reality due to the fact that we have very little to no strong regulatory boards that oversee the operations of companies across our industry. This in turn creates an environment in which companies can take advantage of; employees, students and/or individuals they hold positions of power over, with little to no regulation or accountability.

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the amazing work that MEAA is doing for our industry and community. However, it does bring to light that a union is the main organisation currently challenging people in positions of power, keeping these people/companies accountable and creating minimum standards of work through lobbying.

When discussing this matter with some contemporaries in the industry I have been met with statements such as "companies and the industry do not have the finances to include these types of HR services."

I could not disagree more with these statements. I believe these HR services involve very little financial cost to companies and create massive gains. However, I challenge the ability to place funding in other areas without prioritising what should be a baseline requirement for any company in our industry; a 'people focus'.

COVID19 has brought many issues to the surface. Issues created by our industry's lack of HR and regulatory boards have truly been placed in the spotlight as a result of the pandemic. I view this as a positive. Now is the best time to make positive change while these issues are in the front of our minds. It is a time to reshape the industry for the better.